reportedly shot and killed nine out of the ten fishermen.

The Indian High Commission in Colombo have taken up this matter with the concerned Sri Lankan authorities and conveyed Government of India's grave concern about those incidents and the unprovoked violence by the Sri Lankan Navy against Indian fishing boats and Indian fishermen. The High Commission has also informed the Sri Lankan authorities that recurrence of such incidents would result in the concerned Indian authorities having to take appropriate measures to protect Indian fishermen, which could lead to avoidable consequences and misunderstanding.

(e) The Coast Guard and Indian Naval authorities have been given clear directions to ensure the safety of our fishermen and also to prevent their straying across the maritime boundary into Sri Lankan waters. Our Coast Guard ships are under directions to maintain utmost vigilance and to intensify night patrols. A Coast Guard station at Mandapam provides logistical support to Coast Guard ships operating in the area and maintains a close liaison with the Tamil Nadu State Government authorities in Rameshwaram. Coast Guard ship 'Avvaiyyar' has been rebased at Madras to augment resources in the East coast particularly Palk Bay. In addition, one Work Boat has been positioned at Mandapam to intensify patrolling. Additional vessels are being acquired to be based at Mandapam to intensify patrolling and to provide help to our fishermen.

Purchase of raw jute in West Bengal

871. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred question 1538-B given in the Rajya Sabha on May 9, 1986 and state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has assured at Calcutta on July 1, 1986, that the entire raw jute in West Bengal in the current season, would be purchhased by the Central Government;

(b) if so, what steps have been been taken in that direction;

(c) whether it is a fact that jute industry is facing a crisis due to competition from the synthetic substitute; and

(d) if so, what steps Government have taken to save the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) A statement is attached.

Statement

It is fact that jute industry is facing stiff competition from synthetic substitutes. The Government has been taking corrective measures from time to time to safeguard the interests of jute industry. The measures taken include:—

(i) Purchase of jute goods by Government (DGS&D) from jute industry on cost plus basis;

(ii) In the present Union budget, excise duty has been imposed on DHDPE/PP tapes and import duty on granules has also been marginally increased;

(iii) Persuading other user Departments to encourage use of more jute bags instead of synthetic substitutes for packing fertilizers and compulsory use of 100 per cent new new jute bags by cement industry;

(iv) Providing higher cash compensatory support for export of jute goods;

(v) Introducing a Scheme of buffer stocking of raw jute so as to ensure availability of jute to mills at reasonable prices;

(vi) Improving the competitiveness of jute goods vis-a-vis synthetic substitutes through R&D measures.

†Previously Unstarred Question 639, transferred from the 25th July, 1986.